

January 28, 2015

To the Senate Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Kristi Lloyd, and I am offering testimony in opposition to Resolution 7 which seeks to delist the wolves of Michigan from the Endangered Species List for the purpose of hunting wolves. I'm a Michigan resident and a volunteer with Wolves of the Rockies and other wolf and wildlife advocacy organizations, and have many years of experience on this issue.

Since truth and accuracy matter to Sen. Casperson, it is accurate to say that there is no scientific support in hunting wolves. Since wolves were delisted here in 2011, all we have heard are scare stories and false accounts to stir up public fear and hysteria about wolves. Sen. Casperson wrote of a hair-raising tale of wolves being killed on the grounds of a daycare center into a 2011 resolution, a story that was exposed to be false and led to his apology on the Senate floor in Nov. 2013. During that apology, he claimed that wolves can and will attack humans. But none of the 92,000 deer hunters who hunted deer in the UP in 2013 were attacked. Neither were any hikers, anglers, forest service workers, cross-country skiers, or photographers or any resident of the UP.

Since your resolution makes much of the word "science," I thought you might want to hear about some actual science on this topic.

Reducing livestock depredations was the excuse for the wolf hunt in 2013. In reality, hunting wolves does not decrease depredations. In fact, a study released in 2014, based on 25 years of data from Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, found that hunting wolves increases depredations. The author of the study, Washington State University biologist Ron Weilgus, also conducts a non-lethal program through his Large Carnivore Conservation Lab. Last summer 300 sheep were radio-tagged and monitored in eastern Washington, the area containing the concentration of the state's wolf population, and no sheep were killed by wolves.

A Montana group also works with ranchers to protect their livestock by using non-lethal deterrents such as electric fencing and range riders, and by offering carcass pick up and composting service so as to not attract

unwanted visits by predators. This has resulted in a 93% reduction in attacks by grizzly bears since 2003.

Defenders of Wildlife also works with ranchers in Idaho to protect their livestock. Since 2007 they have kept sheep losses from wolves to less than 1%, which is 90% lower than the rest of the state. This successful program is expanding to other areas.

There are federal funds available to livestock owners to take advantage of non-lethal methods of predator control. Information is also available on how to use them correctly and consistently to protect their livestock. For years, decades, centuries for that matter, lethal control of wolves has not protected livestock.

A study by wolf biologist Doug Smith found that the breeding female of a pack is what holds a pack together. After the loss of the "alpha" female, a pack is more likely to break up and members that are of breeding age go off to find a mate and create another pack. The surviving mate will also seek another mate. So out of one broken pack, at least two more are created. More packs means they need more room to roam which could lead them to livestock areas.

A reasonable solution exists to all of this: Downlisting the gray wolf to threatened status, allowing lethal removal of wolves responsible for livestock losses. This can be a starting point to emphasize the use of non-lethal methods of predator control but it will take cooperation on the part of farmers and the DNR and Wildlife Services. It will also take truthfulness and honesty on the part of others.

If the wolves are downlisted to threatened status, that can ease the minds of livestock growers in knowing they can have wolves killed. But delisting wolves to allow for reckless hunting is counterproductive to lessening depredations by wolves. That is what science tells us.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Lloyd
Hickory Corners, Michigan